

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - June 26, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Earl John Place pled guilty today in federal court in San Diego before United States District Court Judge Napoleon A. Jones, Jr. to attempted inducement of a minor to engage in unlawful sexual activity in violation of 18 United States Code, Section 2422(b). Place, a United States citizen and Catholic monk living in Mexico City, was arrested by Mexican law enforcement officials and expelled from Mexico by Mexican immigration officials on September 13, 2005, and subsequently transported to the United States where he was taken into federal custody.

According to court documents, Place came to the attention of the Immigration and Customs and Enforcement (ICE) in June 2005 during an undercover online investigation of several internet chat rooms. An undercover ICE agent posed as a 13-year-old boy named "Denny." Denny was contacted by Place, who identified himself as a United States citizen named John Place who resided in a monastery in Mexico. As part of his guilty plea, Place admitted that throughout the ensuing months he repeatedly asked "Denny" to participate in cyber sexual conduct with him through the computer, and eventually invited Denny to visit the monastery in Mexico City to engage in sexual conduct. Place even wrote Denny's "grandmother" a letter on

church letterhead inviting Denny to visit Place, using the ruse of studying Mexican history. Place was apprehended at the Mexico City airport where he was supposed to meet Denny.

United States Attorney Lam stated, "The exploitation of children is obnoxious in any form. Attempts to accomplish such exploitation by those in positions of trust are particularly reprehensible."

"The Internet does not recognize international borders. ICE is committed to pursuing all investigative leads to the fullest extent," said ICE Special Agent-in-Charge, Michael Unzueta. "This investigation is a perfect example of why binational cooperation with our law enforcement counterparts in Mexico is important."

Sentencing is scheduled for September 20, 2006, at 8:00 a.m. before United States District Court Judge Napoleon A. Jones, Jr.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 05CR1552-J

EARL JOHN PLACE

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 2422(b) (Attempted Inducement of a Minor to Engage in Unlawful Sexual Activity) Penalties: Mandatory Minimum 5 years and up to 30 years' incarceration and \$250,000 fine

AGENCY

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security